

July 30, 2016

Honorable Governor Baker  
Massachusetts State House  
Office of the Governor  
Room 280  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker,

We are writing to ask that you stand with Attorney General Maura Healey in her effort to enforce the Massachusetts assault weapons ban, which has been in place since 1998.

As clergy, we are called to “seek peace and pursue it.” Recognizing that we are a nation that has experienced too many deaths at the hands of guns, it is imperative that we enforce existing laws that will protect people.

It should not take an Orlando, Newtown, Baton Rouge, San Bernardino, Aurora, or a Dallas here in Massachusetts before we recognize that assault weapons have no place in our communities. We must be proactive and not reactive, and the enforcement of this ban is the first step. AR-15 style assault weapons have killed hundreds of people in mass shootings across the country, and even more are killed by other weapons every day. When these situations happen, it is clergy who are there to grieve with the family, share in the burdens and pains of the community, and even say the last word as we say goodbye to a life that should not have been lost.

Preventing the sale of these deadly military-style weapons is more than a political issue, it is a moral and ethical obligation. Knowing that you are a man of faith, I pray that you will reconsider your stance through prayer and peace.

Massachusetts has an opportunity to truly be that “City Upon A Hill” that leads this nation to value life over violence. We can be an example that enforcement, coupled with commonsense reforms, is a nonpartisan issue and can truly save lives. Moreover, it is the just and moral action to take.

We ask that you stand firm in your faith as the leader of this great Commonwealth and do what is right, and support and assist Attorney General Maura Healey in her efforts to enforce the assault weapons ban.

Blessings and Peace,

*Rev. Dr. Arthur T. Gerald, Jr.*  
***Senior Pastor of the Historic Twelfth Baptist Church***

*Rev. Jeffrey Brown*  
***Associate Pastor of the Historic Twelfth Baptist Church***

*The Rev. Laura Everett*  
***Executive Director of the Massachusetts Council of Churches***

*Mr. Anthony Barsamian*  
***President of the Massachusetts Council of Churches***

*Rev. Burns Stanfield*  
***Senior Pastor of the Fourth Presbyterian Church of South Boston***  
***President of the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO)***

*Rev. Dan Smith*  
***Senior Minister of the First Church in Cambridge***  
***Vice President of the Greater Boston Interfaith Organization (GBIO)***

*Rev. Mark Scott*  
***Associate Pastor of the Azusa Christian Community***

*Rev. Dr. Gregory G. Groover Sr.*  
***Senior Pastor of the Charles Street African Methodist Episcopal Church***

*Rev. Marcus McCullough*  
***Senior Pastor of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Lowell, Massachusetts***

*Rev. Clyde D. Talley*  
***Senior Pastor of the Belmont African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Worcester, Massachusetts***

***CC: Office of the Attorney General Maura Healey***